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// 72-13.com // TWorksg.wordpress.com // T:>Works is supported by the National Arts Council under the Major
Company Scheme for the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022 // T:>Works is an Institute of Public Character
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The MEDIA RELEASE

T:>Works powers on with an all-digital festival of women for the second year

SINGAPORE, 1 June 2021 – From 13 to 31 July, T:>Works will power on with the final iteration of ***Festival of Women, N.O.W. (not ordinary work)*** as a completely digital experience for the second time. Helmed by theatre artist **Noorlinah Mohamed**, the 2021 edition will consolidate various digital platforms to engage new and existing audiences, a strategy that has proven successful in its first all-virtual edition¹ in 2020. With 15 programmes including four livestreamed productions alongside three digital exhibitions, online conversations and workshops, the line-up of *N.O.W. 2021* explores taboo topics that are seldom heard or seen within the diverse communities of women. **T:>Care**, a Creative Action Resilience Enabling initiative that was established in 2020, also returns to encourage donations in support of projects that make positive changes in our communities. In solidarity and alliance, T:>Care identifies a select group of urgencies and projects working at the intersection of gender, class, and race. Contributions received through T:>Care will be divided equally and donated to this select group of beneficiaries.

Noorlinah Mohamed, Artistic Director of *Festival of Women, N.O.W.*, says, “*N.O.W.*, with its focus on making porous the borders between art and life, is the right arena to embrace the digital. The digital offers us a wider reach, cutting across the divides of geography, age and time. This year, we will work with the most accessible platforms to enable ease of engagement with a diverse range of audiences. We then focus on developing appropriate languages, crafting meaningful interactions, and designing unique experiences for the

¹ *Festival of Women: N.O.W. 2020 (not ordinary work)* launched as a virtual inter-disciplinary festival celebrating women creators and change-makers, reaching over 170,400 people across all digital marketing platforms, and, garnering over 59,000 views through the festival’s microsite and streaming platforms such as Facebook Live, SoundCloud, Vimeo and YouTube.

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audience in each digital production. Our excitement with *N.O.W. 2021*'s digital journey is in how each event is designed with the aim of creating an environment for communality: the spirit of convivial gathering, and of being together within a shared digital space.”

Programme Highlights: Women who transgressed, embraced their fears, and got to the heart of intimacy

“The creation on the digital requires a re-thinking of what it means to make engaging performance, and propels us creators to not only think about the narrative but also the environment for the audience. In the digital performance, the ritual of attending, witnessing, as well as partaking in the artistic process is being investigated, developed and thought through, and that is an exciting domain. In *N.O.W. 2021*, each creator gamely considers what it means to make work for a digital space and how to support each other. The creators also have to ensure that the audience is completely immersed and is given space to receive, respond and care for the work they encounter. That is both the challenge and excitement of creating in the digital.”

Noorlinah Mohamed
Artistic Director
Festival of Women, N.O.W. 2021

1 Making The Invisible Visible

N.O.W. 2021's digital journey starts with three digital exhibitions that generate **conversations on invisibility and the unsaid** through everyday objects as well as self-photography of body images and narratives. Starting from 3 June, the three digital exhibitions are:

- ***Thamizhachi: A Digital Museum of Tamil Women Under Construction***, led by anthropologist and writer **Vithya Subramaniam** and **Brown Voices**, a collective of Indian theatre practitioners, privileges the voices and labour of Tamil women, which are often less visible than their male counterparts. Initiated by **Grace Kalaiselvi**, Brown Voice's purpose and vision is to generate and encourage narratives expressing the perspectives, concerns, and aspirations of Singaporean Indians.
- ***nudes.jpg*** curated by artists **ila** and **Sonia Kwek** features images of bodies taken by diverse contributors with an accompanying story of traumas and triumphs, marked by moles, scars and other parts that are distinctively personal and confessional. *nudes.jpg* is the third iteration from the red thread series by ila and Sonia, a series

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initially conceived as a public space intervention in 2018 along Desker and Rowell Road. In 2019 it was an installation and pop-up photo booth at The Substation. As *nudes.jpg*, the iteration goes completely digital, with open calls for online submissions of self-portraits, including an online gathering of exchange, dialogue and reflection from contributors to and visitors of *nudes.jpg* on 27 July 2021.

- ***(un)becoming stories on IG*** showcases a diverse collection of striking narratives on being mothers and daughters collated from the public. The social media platform, Instagram, will be used as the exhibition site. The choice of Instagram positions each story as not just a collection of text but also to enable shareability among the fans of this highly interactive platform. *(un)becoming stories on IG* is an extension of the digital performance co-created by **Sim Yan Ying “YY”** and **Nabilah Said** that will be featured in Week One of *N.O.W. 2021*.

Each of these exhibitions is designed as an interactive portal, inviting visitors to view, comment, critique and contribute to the projects. Starting from 3 June, visitors can expect a digital exhibition site that is uploaded in stages and continues to evolve and grow.

2 Intimacy: Getting to the Heart of the Matter

What is intimacy beyond the physical, in the digital world? How do we achieve it beyond contact, touch, smell and proximity? Of the four original digital performances in *N.O.W. 2021*, three **get to the heart of intimacy**, with narratives devised through interviews and personal accounts. Each performance is a powerful encounter imagined specially for an online space that tenderly reveals inner secrets and musings, and make public the vulnerable and private.

The first week of *N.O.W. 2021* begins with ***(un)becoming***, a devised performance by co-creators **Sim Yan Ying “YY”** and **Nabilah Said** that explores the complex dynamics of mother-daughter relationships through the lives of four characters. Combining live performances, films and digital snooping, *(un)becoming* invites audiences to toggle between screens, peek and read through text messages and search histories, to gain a better understanding of the characters and the secrets they hold.

With ***Not Grey: Intimacy, Ageing & Being***, artist **Salty Xi Jie Ng** collaborates with a diverse group of older women aged 59 to 82. They include a hairdresser, ballet dancer, activist,

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natural healer and hiker, with each collaborator raising timely and provocative questions on the negotiation of intimacy, along with its absence and the changes that come with age and circumstance. Employing the digital breakout rooms as private boudoirs, an intimate group of audience (no more than five) join these ‘sharers of experiences’. With moments of listening, watching as well as interacting, the boudoirs offer the audience moving encounters and an opportunity to reflect on their own relationship with intimacy at whatever stages of life they are in.

This project is an extension of Xi Jie’s longstanding interest in the gerontological universe and will culminate in *The Grandma Reporter*, a collaborative publication project on the culture of senior women around the earth. The publication is available as a downloadable PDF issue at the end of each boudoir performance.

A continuation of *Thamizhachi*’s exploration of the Tamil Woman is the one-night only T:>Care fundraising dinner, *Rasanai: An Invitation to Appreciate* by Brown Voices. Directed by **Grace Kalaiselvi** and featuring **Mumtaz Maricar**, **Rebekah Sangeetha Dorai** and **Vithya Subramaniam**, *Rasanai* is a multi-sensorial livestreamed lecture-performance, inviting viewers to a night of appreciating tastes and histories. *Rasanai* features a special home-delivered meal to be enjoyed with the performance – prepared by MasterChef Singapore Season Two contestant **Vasunthara Ramasamy** and curated in collaboration with Brown Voices – for supporters who donate \$380 and more. This T:>Care fundraising dinner is limited to 60 persons.

3 Embracing Fear & Reclaiming Joy

Much like joy, fear offers a window for women to critique the various ‘glass ceilings’ in their lives. *The ‘F’ Word* is a series of talks held over three different nights, with three different hosts and their special guests with one central aim: to stare at the ‘F’ word, fear, squarely in its face. Each talk unpacks various perspectives and dispels myths through science, psychology as well as personal experiences of how fear is real, yet, necessary. The first session hosted by **Noorlinah Mohamed** aims to understand and know fear, the various ways in which fear reveals itself, the effect on mental well-being and ways of coping with it in life. The second session, hosted by sexual health advocate **Janice Lee**, holds space for conversations on fear of intimacy and relationships with self and others. Former media specialist and now content creation strategist, **Corinne Ng**, hosts the final session.

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Together with her guests, she will examine fear and risk-taking, and take a hard look at the challenges women entrepreneurs face.

In ***Cabaret Joy***, cameras on-site will reveal the inner workings of digital cabaret, bringing the chaos of a ‘live’ cabaret onto the digital world. It will be an interdisciplinary, interactive performance, with live performances merging with film, and audiences are invited to appear on screen and interact with the cabaret by sharing their own stories of joy. It is not for the faint-hearted. *Cabaret Joy* is a three-hour engagement that brings performance, interactivity as well as voyeurism into one joyously naughty universe, made possible, within the digital. In a persistently unequal world for marginalised communities, joy and fear – both seemingly innocuous emotions – can **take on liberating turns**, as individuals start to reposition and reclaim these very emotions. As the final digital performance of *N.O.W. 2021*, *Cabaret Joy* centres joy in a cabaret re-imagined for an online audience. Co-created by the biggest drag queen in Singapore **Becca D’Bus** and actor-comedian **Deonn Yang**, *Cabaret Joy* unpacks joy within the LGBTQ community, where stories of triumphs and success are often eclipsed by narratives of tragedy and trauma. This cabaret thus positions ‘joy’ as a narrative of liberation and reclamation by a historically marginalised community.

4 Gathering and Doing Digitally: Online Workshops

Online experiences *can* be uplifting, comforting and caring as *N.O.W. 2021* re-imagines the possibility of gathering and doing through its workshops. Led by facilitators adept at bringing people together through the digital, the *N.O.W. 2021* workshops are kept intimate to enable conversations and interaction.

Restorative Tonics, led by medicine woman **Ajuntha Anwari**, is an online cooking workshop. Examining food and herb culture and its restorative and efficacious potency on women’s sexual and reproductive organs, Ajuntha prepares several tonics for participants to cook along with her. In times when social distancing makes on-site exchanges of experiences and knowledges challenging, this workshop pushes forth the idea of gathering, now made possible, by the digital. To gather and cook along with Ajuntha, participants can expect cooking kits delivered straight to their homes.

Let’s Talk About Circumcision, led by **Crit Talk**, a platform for alternative views in the Muslim community, is an online workshop raising awareness and understanding of the ritual of circumcision across cultures. With the use of small group activities and moderated

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discussion, including drawing and writing through a digital interface, participants are invited to enter the workshop space with openness and respect for honest and critical conversations as well as reflections to emerge on this topic.

24-Hour Playwriting Competition

Taking place on 17 to 18 July, the 2021 edition of the **24-Hour Playwriting Competition** will introduce meal delivery for the first time, bringing participants together in a shared space, as well as shared experiences. Being apart, after all, need not be lonely. The Telegram platform will also be used for the first time, to facilitate open communication throughout the 24 hours, amongst fellow participants and the organisers.

The annual and much adored competition reinvented itself in 2020 as a platform for aspiring playwrights to conceptualise works presented for the digital screen. A roaring success with over 80 participants, the 2020 edition focused on developing the camaraderie and the spirit of togetherness. Time and space were allocated for participants to drop in for chats and brainstorming sessions with the judges and moderator.

As in the 2020 season, the submitted scripts are adjudicated by three female judges – a director, playwright and performer. The winners are thereafter selected for staging in December under **How To Break A Window II** – a hybrid showcase of in-venue and digital works.

Going digital certainly has its benefits. Last year one of the judges was Singaporean playwright and director, Kaylene Tan, who is based in Melbourne, Australia. This year, we invite Singaporean playwright and director and former Artistic Director of Teater Ekamatra, **Zizi Majid**, from New York. Together with Zizi, one of the most prolific women playwrights in Singapore and educator, **Jean Tay**, as well as director and writer **Sim Yan Ying “YY”** complete the team of three women judges.

Noorlinah concludes, “In these uncertain times, T:>Works is not looking back. This year, after its digital beginnings in 2020, *N.O.W.* fully takes on the mantle of re-imagining performance and engagement in the digital. Embracing the digital need not be about discarding the past. Instead, it entails a parallel journey of exploration and investigation of the digital. How can we re-imagine the artistic experience, and the rituals of going to a performance, meaningfully in the digital? In these times, where the possibility of gathering is

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diminishing, yet sorely needed for a world in flux, we are privileged to have the digital space to continue experimenting and engaging with audiences. Personally, I have grown much as an artistic director with this digital space.”

For more information on the N.O.W. 2021 programmes, please refer to the Annex – Information on Festival of Women N.O.W. 2021 or visit notordinarywork.com. Tickets will be on sale in **early June** via SISTIC, the ticketing agent of *Festival of Women, N.O.W. 2021*.

For more information on T:>Care, please refer to the Annex – Information on T:>Care.

T:>Care is open for donations from **1 June till 13 August** on www.giving.sg/theatreworks-singapore-limited/tcare_2021.

Find us at:

T:>Works Digital Channels

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TWorkssg/

Twitter: www.twitter.com/TWorkssg/

Instagram: www.instagram.com/tworkssg/

YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/TheatreWorksSG/

Wordpress: www.tworkssg.wordpress.com/

END

About T:>Works

Established in 1985, T:>Works is an independent and international arts company based in Singapore at its space, 72-13. It is currently led by Artistic Director, Dr. Ong Keng Sen. T:>Works’ mission and vision is the pioneering of thought leadership in the arts focused on transdisciplinary, transcultural, and inclusive processes. To this end, there is a strong educational perspective with research and discourse contextualising the histories, contemporary experiences, and art practices of Southeast Asia. T:>Works also serves to investigate the current urgencies of being located in Singapore through different creative expressions in the public sphere. It is a recipient of the National Arts Council Major Company Grant for the period from 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2022. T:>Works is an Institute of Public Character with charity status.

About Festival of Women: N.O.W. 2021

The Festival of Women: N.O.W. 2021 is about women championing women presented by T:>Works. It was initiated by theatre artist Noorlinah Mohamed in 2019. As an all-women

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platform in Singapore, it amplifies the work that women creatives, change makers, and social champions do to advance issues affecting women at the intersection of gender, class, and race. A relevant platform in the ecosystem, it privileges collaborations across different disciplines and social sectors. N.O.W. positions engagement with concerns women are passionate and creative about.

About Noorlinah Mohamed

An award-winning actress of stage, television, and film, Noorlinah Mohamed has worked in Asia, Europe, and the US. She is also a teaching artist, and a consultant in arts pedagogy with a PhD in Arts Education from the University of Warwick. Noorlinah is a recipient of the JCCI Cultural Award (2008) and the Women's Weekly Women of our Time Award (2005) for her contributions to the arts.

For more information, please contact:

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Annex: Information on T:>Care

T:>Care: In Solidarity and Alliance

Established in 2020 by T:>Works, T:>Care is a Creative Action Resilience Enabling initiative to support **projects that make positive change in our communities**. In solidarity and alliance, T:>Care identifies a select group of urgencies and projects working at the intersection of gender, class, and race in 2021. As T:>Works is an Institute of Public Character (IPC) with charitable status, contributions will be accompanied by a 250% Tax Deduction Receipt (TDR). T:>Care is hosted on Giving.sg, and will be open for donations from **1 June till 13 August** on www.giving.sg/theatreworks-singapore-limited/tcare_2021.

Upon your donation to the T:>Care initiative, T:>Works will divide your contributions **equally** to donate to the following urgencies and projects:

- Feeding the Community:
Krsna's Free Meals ([Learn More](#)) – A volunteer-run soup kitchen located in the historic Little India area. Determined to serve those in need, it offers free fresh vegetarian breakfast and lunch to people from all walks of life including migrant workers, the elderly, and the destitute.
- Empowering with Education:
ReadAble ([Learn More](#)) – an organisation that runs weekly English literacy programmes for children and migrant women in an underserved neighbourhood with the aim of improving social mobility. ReadAble also runs a numeracy programme (CountAble) and an outreach arm (ReadyAble) that trains others to set up community-based literacy programmes.
- Providing a Home for Transgender Individuals:
The T Project ([Learn More](#)) – Singapore's first and only social service for the transgender community. Always striving to address the vulnerabilities faced by transgender individuals, it provides rent-free residency, workshop space, and professional counselling among many of its other services.
- Building Solidarities and Alliances for Women Championing Women:
N.O.W. – a Festival of Women initiated in 2019 by theatre artist Noorlinah Mohamed

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and presented by T:>Works. As an all-women platform in Singapore, it champions the work of women from diverse disciplines, across the arts and social sectors.

For more information, please contact:

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Rasanai: An Invitation to Appreciate

A T:>Care fundraiser dinner

24 July, 7.30pm

Directed by Grace Kalaiselvi

Written by Grace Kalaiselvi, Rajkumar Thiagaras & Vithya Subramaniam

Performed by Mumtaz Maricar, Rebekah Sangeetha Dorai & Vithya Subramaniam

Sound Design by Ramesh Krishnan

Filming & Editing by Danielle Koh & Toh Cheng Yee

A young woman faced with her grandmother's declining health races to revisit their family's history. She struggles with remembering, knowing, and understanding her history.

Remembering is not easy; but is forgetting an option?

Rasanai: An Invitation to Appreciate is a multi-sensorial livestreamed performance, revealing and reveling in the sounds and tastes, histories and practices of the often occluded hand of the Singaporean Tamil women. In her labour of life - caring, healing, building, feeding, gathering, and loving - how is her legacy remembered? How is she celebrated by those that come after?

In conjunction with *Rasanai*, T:>Works has organised a fundraiser dinner limited to 60 persons. Supporters who donate \$380 or more will enjoy a special home-delivered dinner prepared by Masterchef Season Two contestant Vasunthara Ramasamy (Vasun), especially curated in collaboration with Brown Voices. Contributions will be divided equally among the four T:>Care beneficiaries. For details, please visit https://www.giving.sg/theatreworks-singapore-limited/tcare_2021 or email: donate.tcare@gmail.com.

Festival of Women N.O.W. 2021 Programmes

PRE-FESTIVAL DIGITAL EXHIBITIONS | 3 JUNE ONWARDS

Thamizhachi: A Digital Museum of Tamil Women Under Construction	nudes.jpg A digital exhibition of body images and their narratives	(un)becoming stories on IG A digital exhibition on mother-daughter relationships in Singapore
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WEEK 1 | 13 – 18 JULY

■ PERFORMANCES	■ TALKS	■ WORKSHOPS
■ (un)becoming <i>Co-created by Sim Yan Ying “YY” & Nabilah Said</i> 14 – 15 July, 7.30pm 16 – 17 July, 7.30pm & 10.30pm Livestreamed Digital Performance	■ The ‘F’ Word: #1 <i>With Noorlinah Mohamed & guests</i> 13 July, 7.30pm @ Facebook Live	
24-Hour Playwriting Competition 17 – 18 July @ Zoom & Telegram		

WEEK 2 | 21 – 25 JULY

■ PERFORMANCES	■ TALKS	■ WORKSHOPS
■ Not Grey: Intimacy, Ageing & Being <i>Conceptualised by Salty Xi Jie Ng</i> 22 – 23 July, *7pm, *8.30pm, 10pm 24 – 25 July, 2pm, 3.30pm, 5pm, *7.30pm & *9.15pm *Women-only performance (All women welcome, including cis, lesbian, bi, queer, trans) Livestreamed Digital Performance (E-Publication available 22 July onwards)	■ The ‘F’ Word: #2 <i>With Janice Lee & guests</i> 21 July, 7.30pm @ Facebook Live	■ Let’s Talk About Circumcision <i>Facilitated by Sya & Nabilah, Crit Talk</i> 23 July, 7.30pm @ Zoom
■ Rasanai: An Invitation to Appreciate <i>By Brown Voices</i> A charity fundraiser in aid of T:>Care 24 July, 7.30pm Livestreamed Digital Performance		<hr/> ■ Restorative Tonics <i>Facilitated by Ajuntha Anwari</i> 25 July, 10.30am @ Zoom

WEEK 3 | 28 – 31 JULY

■ PERFORMANCES	■ TALKS	■ WORKSHOPS
■ Cabaret Joy <i>Led by Becca D’Bus & Deonn Yang</i> 29 – 31 July, 9.30pm till late Livestreamed Digital Performance	■ In Conversation with the collaborators of Not Grey: Intimacy, Ageing & Being 26 July, 7.30pm @ Zoom	
	<hr/> ■ In Conversation with the artists & contributors of nudes.jpg 27 July, 7.30pm @ Zoom	
	<hr/> ■ The ‘F’ Word: #3 <i>With Corinne Ng & guests</i> 28 July, 7.30pm @ Facebook Live	